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TAGS: [PREL](#) [ETTC](#) [KSUM](#) [CARICOM](#) [XL](#)

SUBJECT: CARICOM: LITTLE PROGRESS ON CONFERENCE ON THE
CARIBBEAN

REF: A. GEORGETOWN 406

- [1B.](#) STATE 43123
- [1C.](#) GEOGRETOWN 391
- [1D.](#) STATE 49116

See action request - para 4.

Summary

[11.](#) (SBU) After a month of trying for a substantive discussion with CARICOM Secretariat on the agenda for the 20/20 Conference, Secretary General Carrington told Ambassador that CARICOM agrees with the broad themes suggested by the U.S. and wished to add another "Migration and Development" that might include discussion of deportees. Carrington hopes CARICOM will be able to flesh out content for each theme during a CARICOM Summit in Belize next week. End Summary.

Little Progress on Agenda

[12.](#) (SBU) CARICOM Secretary General Carrington, along with A/SG Granderson and Foreign Policy Program Manager Atkinson-Jordan met Ambassador and DCM May 3 for a long-awaited (ref A) meeting to discuss WHA's proposed agenda for the government-to-government meetings during the Conference on the Caribbean. Referring to notes, Carrington said CARICOM agreed with the "four broad themes" in the draft agenda (ref B), referring to them as Promotion of Democratic Institutions, Economic Growth and Development, Regional Prosperity, and Security. He said energy and social investment fit under the economic theme and U.S-CARICOM relations fits under the democracy theme. Still referring to notes, Carrington suggested a fifth theme, "Migration and Development", noting that in the context of the large Caribbean diaspora in the U.S., there must be talk of the relation of movement of people to development. He also suggested that the US (sic) might wish to discuss the deportee issue.

[13.](#) (SBU) Carrington noted the need for content to fill out each of the five themes and said he is "reasonably comfortable" this will be achieved when CARICOM foreign ministers and heads of government see each other during the COFCOR meeting and CARICOM-Central America Summit, both in Belize next week.

[14.](#) (SBU) Granderson asked Ambassador for assistance in getting answers to three questions from Washington:
-- Are the proposed agenda items for both the POTUS and SecState meetings?
-- How does the USG see the outcome document?

-- What is the USG view on implementation processes for Summit outcomes?

The CARICOM side had no views to offer on these issues. With reference to implementation, Granderson said CARICOM is "getting there" on the CITIA statement (ref A and D) and hopes to have something after the Belize summit.

Attendance

15. (SBU) The current draft list of CARICOM Secretariat attendees for the summit includes 18 persons, but the Secretariat is trying to whittle it down further. CARICOM

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declined to provide any specificity beyond that already informally shared with post (ref C). Carrington voiced concern at the cost of the summit, referring to high airfares and expensive hotel rooms, and cost of technical support for the conference. He did not ask for financial support, but his repetition of the point conveyed the clear indication that CARICOM would welcome an offer of financial assistance. Regarding bilateral attendance, Carrington said he had no reason to believe any CARICOM head of government would not attend.

16. (SBU) Carrington referred repeatedly to the Americas Competitiveness Forum as a good precursor to the Conference on the Caribbean, noting that the question of international competitiveness is most fundamental for Caribbean economies. At least seven CARICOM ministers will attend, in addition to CARICOM secretariat staff. Carrington is personally working to encourage strong representation by the Caribbean private sector.

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Comment: CARICOM under Pressure

17. (SBU) Carrington noted with resignation that CARICOM has three summits, thirteen ministerials, and one meeting of the Bureau of Heads of Government scheduled between now and July, giving the Secretariat an impossible workload and making it difficult to ensure implementation of decisions made at the various meetings. This is on top of the already near-impossible task of coordinating consensus among ambassadors, heads of government, foreign ministers, and the Secretariat. Both the CARICOM Secretariat and Guyana's MFA give the strong impression that they would appreciate a firm USG hand on the steering wheel as we drive toward June 19.

Robinson